

[I want to start by exempting myself from this invitation for merciless criticism at the end, in my new responsible position, to use a word that is commonly applied to the Government of South Vietnam (which is my main responsibility) I am feeling rather fragile as a result of the last couple of months. Merciless criticism on any subject I don't need. Friendly, supporting comments.] The Cuban crises in 1962 which <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ just recently <sup>ed</sup> ~~commemorating~~ left us with ambivalent attitudes toward both the notion of crises and the notion of management. It taught us that crises could be good <sup>if</sup> ~~if~~ they could result in the advancement of national aims, if they were not entirely episodes of anxiety and offensive behavior. It raised the possibility that crises could be looked at to some extent as opportunities. At the same time the word management, as in "news management," acquired some unfavorable connotations, and yet the crises coincided with a growing feeling that the likelihood of major war unprecedented by a crises was growing much smaller than we considered earlier. Those of you who have been in command and control problems for years know that most of the effort ~~over the years really I would say~~ was based upon planning ~~for and planning~~ related to an episode that was thought of as essentially an out-of-the-blue kind of aggression against the United States. The indications of the Cuban crises, and then looking back on other incidents that we've been through, began to impress people more with the thought that if major war ever came, in particular if major nuclear war ever came, it would come ~~as a result of a major crises~~ preceded by a crises; which is to say that it would not be in the nature of a building that burned to the ground before the fire alarm alerts



the Fire Department, but that would be preceded by a period of urgent searching for a solution at the highest levels of the Government. A period of internal consultations, a period of very deep and somewhat prolonged, ~~that is having some duration, a period of~~ soul searching at the highest levels of Government, consultations with our allies and probably communications of various forms with opponents. Why this perception didn't really ~~focus interest didn't~~ arise much earlier is a little hard to say because there have been events that the newspapers label crises in much the same terms as the Cuban crises before, without apparently having raised this kind of attention. We can all think of Suez, Lebanon, the <sup>T. P. O. R. and</sup> Kuwait on a slightly lesser scale <sup>we recall</sup> such events that were typically labeled crises as the break-up of the <sup>such</sup> summit conference, the U-2 episode, even things like the Skybolt episode, certainly the Bay of Pigs. We can all think of these affairs. In part the <sup>P</sup> probably they didn't raise the same deal of attention and interest because in the case for example of Kuwait <sup>the same that one</sup> and some of the others, <sup>e.g. the</sup> Bay of Pigs, there was considerable public disagreement with the objectives that seemed to be pursued. A good deal of controversy <sup>so</sup> unlike typically the Cuban crises so that the administration at the time didn't get the credit for the degree of management which it may have exhibited during the crises. And didn't really raise this crises as such as something to be studied to learn from and management is something to be analysed and improved. Well, as I say this is the legacy of the Cuban crises to a large extent. In connection with my duties in ISA, I'm involved in day to day operations concerning South Vietnam which <sup>at the moment</sup> is obviously <sup>has the</sup> character.



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of rather continuing crises, but that's only been for a couple of months. It happens to be preceded by some six months in which I was studying crises, past crises with hope to learning some insights that would be available in the future. I got as a newspaper reader a person whose knowledge of crises had earlier been based mainly on the newspapers, I got in the course of that study a good many surprises as to what <sup>had been</sup> was going on. It left me with the feeling that crises were not only an unstudied, but really an ununderstood phenomenon, which means of course that study can be expected to be rewarding. At the same time the thing that I became most conscious of in the course of the study were the obstacles to research on crises: In many cases unanticipated obstacles, the barriers that arose, the pressures that arose against studying these phenomenon, the walls that are constructed around the inner phenomenon of crises had been hidden from me largely, and I think are hidden from a good many people. And they are significant in themselves. In fact, I think I'm going to organize this brief talk around some of the aspects of crises which are barriers ~~of~~, which constitute barriers ~~to~~ and ~~problems~~ to the study of them. I think that to understand some of these problems, some of the peculiar aspects of crises data is to understand some important things about crises. The aspects of crises then that I'm going to talk about are four: the crises as failure, the crises as surprise, the crises as dialogue, and the crises as summit. Now I'm going to enlarge on these in sort of a couple of rounds. The fact is that the major crises that I have come to mind — the ones that I've listed and <sup>others that</sup> ~~the ones that~~ you think do have the characteristics of coming, as they appear in the newspapers at least, coming surprises, and as a matter of fact in a close examination



They usually did involve significant surprises. Now these surprises  
 were not always what the public thought they were or what the President  
 may have said they were, what various columnists may have said they  
 were. But they seemed to be and nevertheless they were very significant  
 aspects of surprises. This in itself becomes surprising as you begin  
 to delve into the process of crises decision making. Because of course  
 one thing you become aware of is the extraordinary range of information  
 that the President has available to him. The kinds of information,  
 who secrecy is quite ~~as~~ well guarded, the variety of these things, and  
 the intensity of the intelligence estimate of process leads up to  
 these advances and the fact that despite this effort and the sophistication  
 of it, and I know a number of you must be involved in supporting that  
 effort in one way or another, inspite of these, quite shocking sur-  
 prises did occur. And the fact that the crises began with, now we (one,  
 of course, the dramatic one I mentioned of Cuba, was the actual appearance  
 of the MRBM's and IRBM's on Cuba, but in several of the other cases I  
 mentioned as well were major surprises. Suez, this is one that is a  
 little complicated to discuss because ~~it's~~ <sup>the</sup> a surprise was not certainly  
 the simple fact that the British and French did cooperate with the  
 Israelas in the attack but the timing of the attack, the exact nature  
 of the attack, did in fact involve tactically at least quite startling  
 surprise to Eisenhower and Dallas. This is attested by a number of  
 people in public accounts of this now, supported internally. Of  
 course all that's necessary is that there by surprise about a significant



... The crisis is almost defined by the need to consider violent  
... in the short run. Why were not alternatives prepared  
... that would have precluded the need for these violent alterna-  
... there are all questions which, to be defined and  
... which are going to be asked the President in his  
... conference. And the prospect of those questions may keep the  
... President from having a press conference in the next week or two  
... in this event. That's a rather good test. He is going to have to  
... face those questions in the press, in the cables from our allies  
... and in his official family. To say that those questions were raised  
... is to say that the president had political stakes, in the administra-  
... tion has political stakes, in this episode which we label a crisis.  
... It means that then that he ~~can be~~, however it comes out, he can be  
... judged as having failed in some respect and of course he has many  
... potential failures still ahead of him. By definition, more or less,  
... the public attention has focused upon the President's role and the  
... administration policy in this episode, which means his decisions  
... will have to be made in the light of the outcome but also in the  
... light of whatever leaks out of the decision process. He will be  
... judged on the basis ~~on the basis~~ of his competence in general and  
... this has political significance in particular when this thing comes  
... near a political payoff, that is, an election--a period of payoff.  
... When the public is in a mind to weigh what it hears and what it  
... learns about Presidential performance in administration performance,  
... and act on it by their votes. Now curiously, I think, having looked



that it not entirely coincidentally, several of these things came  
 during election years, in fact in ~~xxxx~~ striking close connection  
 with the election. It's true both with the Suez which ~~xxxx~~  
 happened in the eve of Eisenhower's election and of Cuba. It's also  
 true of several other episodes we mentioned. We had a little  
 incident on the eve of this election and that had its consequences  
 recently when the attack on <sup>Bien Hoa</sup> ~~Bein-wa~~ was made just prior to the  
 election. Again I'll come back to this point, but I'll point out  
 right now that this is a key reason why it is in fact difficult to  
 study crises. The administration has almost nothing to gain by a  
 close study of the decision process during the crises. If as in  
 Cuba the outcome was regarded as good, that picture is not going  
 to be enhanced really, they're not going to gain any additional  
 points by the fact that ~~xx~~ it was reached by a good decisions process.  
 They get just as much credit if it were a bad decision process. If  
 the outcome were bad, as in the Bay of Pigs, the President knows  
 better than to try to say, how well they had readily judged and  
 evaluated and planned before. Because he certainly wouldn't gain  
 any points for that. All he can do is lose, really, because even  
 Cuba, too, Cuba the missile crisis, could be tarnished by in principle  
 a close look at the decision process. And particularly a partial  
 look is likely to run this risk. In other words, details can be  
 found which taken out of context of other decisions could look bad.  
 It doesn't help anybody. Because as I say these are events which  
 are regarded as tests of the administration in which the public is  
 very interested and is watching very closely, unlike a number of  
 other events, in which the press is probing for leaks very hard which  
 allies are concerned, . In this situation a very defensive

attitude results in and the result is that they are in fact not  
really friendly to the people who know the details to  
the needed for search for truth on these matters. That is too  
bad in a way, because going back to the first aspect, the crises as  
surprises, I think that a possible conclusion, having looked at one a  
number of these as to why the surprises occur was because there is  
this large area of phenomenon, political high-level political  
behavior, not just in this US but in our opponents and our allies,  
that is not really very well understood. And that in turn reflects  
some lack of study and lack of special access. And of course this  
situation is prolonged both for the President and for the US and  
for the whole international system by this I think rather invidious  
attitude toward study of the data. The third aspect, the crises as  
dialogue, this we've heard a great deal about during the Cuban  
crises. Although to ~~fix~~ look back on events which did not win the  
managers the acclaim, probably unfairly, something like Kuwait which  
could be looked at obviously have this same aspect of a conscious  
attempt to use the instruments that Government policy to convey a  
message to the opponent. Not so much to effect his capability even  
by the preparations we were making although they had some tendency  
to do that, but above all to teach him ~~something~~ something, to convince  
him of something which earlier words <sup>had</sup> failed to convince him of, and  
to do this on a <sup>very</sup> urgent basis with as high reliability as possible.  
This is another reason why the President is so closely involved. On  
one hand this involves coordinating the activities of the various  
incidents of ~~Emazn~~ Government to suppress noise or false alarm or  
incorrect signals and to try to give a unified picture that will  
be as convincing as possible. Now a crises as dialogue to it which



Now a crisis or dialogue has some peculiarities to it which as a communication process which have to be understood. One is that your talking about adversary communications. Your main talking in other words, not about intentions entirely about trying to convince ~~for instance~~ <sup>for instance</sup> someone the sort of situation in communication process which we think of within a team to use the technical notion, team theory, in which one has joint objectives, common objectives, that some difference in information, some limited ability to communicate, the problem is to share your information. Its true that in many of the circumstances of the crises you do want to convince the opponent that of something that is true. In that respect it general communication which may want to keep him from learning some other things which are also true. You want to focus these expectations of his very definitely. You may want to deceive him. You may definitely want to bluff in terms of timing or intensity of your response or many aspects of it. So its not just a simple, in other <sup>than</sup> ~~in other~~ words, process, calls for even more control and simply sort of laying open the books. It is a more complex matter. It also, some other complexities of this process are that it is a process that goes on over a great many channels; of course this is what makes it possible to some extent. The President has in fact many avenues with which, ways with which he can send ~~and~~ information, specifically to an opposing head of state. An opposing head of state spends in this case, one of the stature of Russia particularly, spends a good deal of money as we do on intelligence apparatus with which to gain information on our activities and that apparatus not only constitutes channels with which he may be informed or persuaded or deceived but channels in which he virtually must be educated since



he will almost surely attach peculiar significance to the indication that he gets through that means. Thus measures, which he has spent money to pick up, of the nature of deployments, alerts, possible even signals of various kinds, these are aspects of our behavior which not only can be controlled so as to convey something to us, but must be controlled. And incidentally an interesting aspect of that is that in many cases this conversation <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ over the heads of the respective publics who are not in on these particular channels. The same is ~~xxx~~ true of course of diplomatic channels, which can get fairly elaborate to protect them ~~for~~ the next problem which is sort of the multi-audience problem. This is one which both heads of state face as a very serious one. To ~~some extent~~ their dialogue is conducted with a good many people listening in, ~~to a large extent~~. And these people listening in, including the publics on both sides, also including the allies, are not people who necessarily at all share the same view of risks and objectives, even to the extent that the opponents may hold them in common. So you have the problem <sup>then</sup> ~~that~~ of trying to ~~xxxxxxxx~~ convince someone of something, trying to convey something to him, and at the same time controlling the impression that is being given to eavesdroppers, in effect. So as to avoid losing in various other ways, unconnected with sort of the main confrontation. Finally, this aspect of the crises as Summit Conference, and I've alluded to this already, ~~but that is~~ this is a dialogue to a large extent between heads of state, conducted so far as they can in many ~~so~~ devotion with respect to their publics and in some cases with respect to their own publics or press and, to the extent that leaks are possible, to the Government Bureaucracy. Now all of these feed in to an aspect of high-level crises decision-making which is to some extent known to the public <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ certain instances particularly, which



is more and more striking. I think the more ~~exam~~ examples of this phenomenon one looks at. And that is, the peculiar extent to which this decision-making is Presidential decision-making very striking. This became known to the ~~public~~ in the connection with the Cuban crises because as I say although a certain amount, more than is usually known what the Governmental decision process did lead out in that, in part because they felt it really wouldn't ~~harm~~ hurt them particularly, and the other. In general atmosphere is kind of favorable, and the institution which is of course more formal than usually of the so called Excom, the executive committee of the NSC, conceived or generally described as a more or less ad hoc association of close advisors to the President. That gave the impression, and I must say I had this impression when I first looked at it, that we ~~were~~ were witnessing something rather peculiar that to be associated strictly with the Cuban crises. And a matter of fact this term management, which came up later in connection with the activities with the ex-com was often thought of as something that was invented during the Cuban crises: And here had been an innovation which could now be applied elsewhere. Now a major message to convey on the nature of this decision-making is to the importance and the implications of the generality of this type of decision making which centers a great part of what is ~~an~~ usually the ~~staff~~ staff work of large staffs in the hands of a very small number of ~~man~~ people. It's also necessary to look at what sort of ~~man~~ people these are, also has implications. But above all



It's very striking as I say that the role of the President in this  
 to all of the crises take place as the public sees them at high  
 noon, with the principals on both sides sort of striding down on  
 the city street for a confrontation with all the police in behind  
 shutters sort of looking. Now of course they're striding forth to  
 partly ~~they are not~~ this is a strictly a  
 military confrontation and has this message, dialogue, aspect. That  
 this notion that the President at this moment or for these days or  
 hours is to an unusual degree alone is I think correct, and I must  
 say that the big surprise that I've had in the last couple of  
 months working on South Vietnam and some other problems has been to  
 find that the phenomenon in fact all of these phenomena and these  
 above all that I associated with these major crises that were  
 familiar to me as a newspaper reader, were in fact characteristic of day to  
 day operations and that isn't to say of noncrisis operations, but what  
 I was learning was the universality of crises as seen as the  
 Presidential level. In fact these crises come along many many  
 of them without surfacing at all, without necessary coming to full  
 intensity, at such a rate that you can regard them as sort of normal  
 a thing. And yet they don't lose their character as crises. They'd  
 be recognized as I think as crises by the public if they were described  
 fully and the only surprise would be that they were so many of  
 them, so many areas of the world and they were happening all  
 at once and the fact that so many of them were hidden successfully.  
 then  
 Well, in particular I'm saying this role of the President. Now why  
 do we have this particular role of the Presidency. The implications  
 of those of you who are concerned with supporting the Presidency, is



of course that this goes along a long way toward answering the question who manages the crises and who should information systems put for this purpose be designed to serve. The answer is the President personally must be kept very much in mind. And that is a fact which has more significance than might first appear. To the extent the President plays, is a peculiar sort of person in our decision making system, in our policy making system. He doesn't look the more you look at him the less he looks like the bureau heads that you're usually thinking about at various component parts of the problem. And this is I think something very important to understand when it comes to influencing this process of decision making, preparing for it and planning for it. To put it very simply the President is a politician, that's the nature of our system. If he isn't a politician he was coopted by some people who were politicians, to go back a little bit in memory, and he is bound to be surrounded by some politicians very closely, at the highest level, and those people are going to be in the high-level process. Now there are some other aspects of this, he's an amateur, he's bound to be an amateur, he isn't going to be a professional at the kinds of decisions we're talking about. We haven't had the experience of any one who has come up through the system in any real sense in State or in Defense, in CIA who've had a really long-term background with a large series and who have witnessed this kind of decision making at high levels. Even in his job, which is extremely expensive and very good about as good as on the job training in very long hours, he doesn't get necessarily quite as much experience in this kind of thing as some other people lower down in the system because of the extremely broad range of his responsibility. Now this is also true of the other people who



... to be honestly talking to him, in the course of the process.  
In fact its very instructive now to ask who are these people, and if  
we look at Cuba and we look at the ex-com for example, we find that  
it has about in its enlarged in the full state people who really  
there's about four or five people from state department, about  
three people from defense, couple; one really from CIA, a man from  
the Treasury, a man from the Justice Department, Vice  
President; one military man, Maxwell Taylor, is the only military  
representative on this body. Now these are events on the one hand  
have a very high component of military activity as part of the problem  
and of course what makes it a crisis is that it may well lead to a  
great deal more. Many of the questions that have to arise are going  
to be military, and without saying that the problem is predominately  
military, the fact is that one might well say why isn't why aren't  
a few more uniformed men as qualified to express general judgement  
to the President on this matter as a man from the Justice Department  
or the Treasury, let's say fairly low down in state. I think this  
is, well I'm not going to fully answer that today, but it is ~~an~~  
something to consider when we're thinking about the military aspects  
of supporting this process, that is within the joint staff, within the  
Services, within the Pentagon. I think one of the problems to well  
something to be regarded as one of the challenges here is to produce  
military output, output of military staffs that will be regarded as  
a more valuable commodity by the President let's say and will be sought  
for, and I think one real factor why there hasn't been more of that  
has been in part because of some lack of understanding of the nature  
of this process, this sort of thing that I'm talking about today.  
to relate this to the interest of information-system people and

... military cases. Why is there this concentration of attention upon the President himself, and the various things that I've mentioned, things all of which result in a hostility to students after the event, like me, also are involved in a hostility to just having too many people in the room generally at the time.

Now, the implication, the presumption that there has already been a failure, one that may be politically costly. That there has been a surprise, which in itself <sup>is a</sup> politically damaging event as the CIA's sensitivity over the years has shown, one that particularly easy to focus on; why was this not foreseen, why was nothing done about it. All of these create very high political sensitivity. The aspect of dialogue involves diplomatic communications, and as I say these are various other black means which in fact tend to be concentrated very exclusively for reasons for security and also for this reason for multiple audience. Things are to be said to one ally that must not be heard by other allies. Things are to be said in some cases to an opponent that must not be said, not necessarily because if properly understood they would be so ~~dam~~ dangerous, but because of the ~~high~~ probability of their being misunderstood out of context. Things must ~~not~~ often not be said, must not lead to the public in large degree because of the importance that they not ~~leak~~ leak to the opponent's public. For example, the U-2 episode, raises the interesting, ~~to me~~, point, that, ~~it~~ as it came out afterwards, of course, Khrushchev had known for years that we ~~were~~ were flying U-2's, who exactly were we protecting from the information that we were flying them. By our secrecy earlier, by our lies, lies being after all a necessary requirement in some cases ~~for~~ for security. A point to return to in a minute. (If you're not prepared to lie



about none of these matters you have no chance of keeping them away from questioners, keeping the truth away from questioners.) Now in this case its fairly evident that Khrushchev was in effect being protected from the pressures of his own public to respond to the U-2's and the fact, the exposure of the fact that he couldn't respond during ~~this~~ this earlier period. I have a suspicion that Eisenhower must have been about as anxious to ~~xxxxx~~ the reveal the very admirable fact, the success of the U-2, the development of the U-2, he must have been under the same pressures that our administration has been under, this administration from time to time, it kept that secret, and as I say a secret essentially from the Russian public, the Russian allies, specifically the Chinese in particular. Well this is not an unusual phenomenon. As a matter of fact the, an aspect of the political implications of a lot of these events, is that in political life ignorance is an excuse, Keeping an ally even or an opponent, or in some cases you might say the President, it doesn't work that way but at least alleging ignorance can protect him, and indeed after all in the U-2 affair Eisenhower was urged for political reasons by a lot of people to maintain ignorance of the U-2. Now ignorance is of course, it has its own political costs for a President. He is not suppose to be ignorant of too much and yet its a price that he may often prefer to pay, lets say the loosing points because he was ignorant of something, than to have appeared to have known about something and failed to act in time, failed to take some measure which some segment of the public feels that he should have taken. For this reason, the role of the Presidency in one of these procdsses is carefully guarded by the people around him. Whatever you learn about what the President knew or what he did or

fun to  
approach

what he chose or what he thought during a crisis and this is in effect a secret; ~~is let out~~, is controlled very closely as a matter of fact. It may not be true in many cases. A very closely guarded secret in fact is what the President's interventions were, what the President's perception of the problem was. This for many reasons, and I don't mean political on the crassist ~~humanx human~~ domestic sense, the prestige of the President ~~ambixhaxant~~ trust and the attitudes toward the President, the expectations of Presidential behavior are an ~~importanx importan~~ important component in our influence in our other nations both allies and opponents. And it's regarded as terribly important that the ~~wrong~~, that his actions not reveal the wrong expectations, the wrong things. This is one more barrier, as I said to the process of studying crises; the fact that the President himself does play a very large role in it. Because Presidential data, the memos that he asked for, the memos that went directly to him, accounts of conversations that he took place are very closely guarded, for this reason, as much as, to name some other things that are also hard to get at and very necessary to understand, is intelligence data or very close high-level diplomatic ~~communications~~ communications. All of these are ingredients of crisis decision making, all of them extremely hard to get at; and lacking this ability, that means that the, to get at this kind of data, that means that the history of past crises is to a large extent hidden history, its secret history. The decision making in those crises, whatever long detailed accounts may have come out by journalists or research students, and so forth, ~~is-in-fact-this-decision-making~~ is secret to an unusual, very unusual degree. And that means that our understanding of those events, are, as both newspaper readers and as



potential operators and as potential presidents, you might say, is almost certain to be distorted and imperfect. To draw one small point from that, the baggage of history that a president brings with him to the decisions that he faces having newly become a professional at this when he comes into the presidency, the intellectual baggage is almost certain to contain wrong notions of what happen in Cuba, what happened in Suez, and how the whole system works. So that even the President, if you could <sup>hypnotize</sup> him and get from him what he knew who would certainly be able to tell you more than you could read in any book, more than you could learn from any other person, any other individual, not only about the events that he participated in but he can make better guesses about the process, he will not know what happened entirely. In particular on the ~~the~~ other side for example. "The last minute here, my last minute here" to draw some implications of this for further study possibly of this process and implementation. First-just-on-the, I think in general more understanding on the way the decisions are made, based on what study is possible, is perhaps the most useful commodity in trying to improve this process of decision making. Better plans will be ~~written~~ written, can be written, <sup>it would take a lot more</sup> not; you'd have to say a lot more than I've had time to say here today, that is to show how plans ~~can~~ could be improved, but I think above all they could be improved more to just give one example, the President is not <sup>regarded</sup> regarded as the highest bureaucrat, whose objectives are laid down in some piece of ~~xxx~~ paper that may be described as basic national security policy or something else, in other words that he's one more transducer in the system who can be reliably predicted by the system and who commits himself like a good bureaucrat should be willing to do. The President in fact isn't

going to commit himself in advance whatever he may tell the planners and plans written on that assumption are going to be useless and not used or on the other hand are going to be used to very bad effect in the event. He is among other things going to take account of many symbolic aspects of including their domestic political aspects of actions in a very complex way taking account of a very broad range of consequences. He is going to choose his advisors very closely from people whose attitudes he trusts. He will choose his advisors with very great consciousness of the costs to him of leaks of his own decision making and the likelihood and the risk of leaks. He is not, whatever, however nice the command post that is built for him, he is not going in the course of one of these crises, small or large, to come down there and make his decision in the full view of a lot of majors, or wizzkids, or anybody who just doesn't need to know. This absurd propensity of the President to make his decisions at his desk and his telephone reflects above all not just that he likes to feel homey in the course of this, but that he wants to control who hears who he talks to and whose decision and opinion he respects and what consideration he's taking into account. And that isn't going to change, by the way, but that's one small implication, I think, of some earlier planning that was quite unrealistic on terms of the presidential role.